

AN EASY CAPTURE METHOD FOR BROWN TREE SNAKES (*BOIGA IRREGULARIS*)

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The brown tree snake, (*Boiga irregularis*), is an exotic animal introduced to the island of Guam in the 1940s probably via military cargo (Fritts, 1987, 1988). This mildly venomous species has since been responsible for the extirpation of several species of indigenous birds (e.g., Savidge, 1987), threatens several others, and is also considered a significant agricultural (Fritts and McCoid, 1991), public health and safety (Fritts et al., 1990), and economic pest (McCoid, 1991). Guam is a focal point for air and sea cargo to many other parts of the Pacific and mainland United States, thereby creating a high risk situation for introduction of the brown tree snake into these areas. Considerable research is being carried out to understand the snake and to develop methods for preventing its spread beyond Guam and for reducing populations on Guam. At the same time, operational containment and control efforts have been implemented at air and sea port facilities on Guam to reduce the risk of export of these snakes. Both the research and control efforts involve the capture of large numbers of brown tree snakes.

The brown tree snake is nocturnal and, as its name suggests, it spends a significant portion of its time in trees. Personal communications with researchers and operational control staff with the USDI National Biological Service and USDA Animal Damage Control revealed a variety of methods for capturing brown tree snakes from trees. These methods include use of snake tongs, quickly climbing a tree and grabbing the snake with a gloved hand, and having one person shake the tree while another waits to grab the snake after it falls. Here, a simple method for capturing brown tree snakes out of trees is described if snake tongs are unavailable.

A branch or stick with a fork at one end is required. The stick should be about 1-1.5 m in length and the "prongs" of the fork should be about 10-15 cm in length. This allows a person of average height to reach up to about 3 m high in a tree. After locating a snake in a tree (usually with the aid of a spotlight or flashlight), the fork of the stick is placed in the middle of the snake. As soon as contact is made the stick is rapidly twirled to create an effect similar to winding spaghetti on a fork. The snake's first response is to coil around the object. This allows the handler adequate time to bring the stick down with the snake attached and restrain it by hand. This method provides an easy means for an individual to capture brown tree snakes when snake tongs are unavailable.

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要 約

ミナミオオガシラの簡単な捕獲法

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先端部が二股に分かれた枝か棒を使い、ヘビが木の上にいるときに、先端部を胴体にあてる。そこでスパゲッティをフォークに巻き付けるように、棒を回転させると、ヘビは棒の方に巻きついてくるので、そのまま下におろす。

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